
OBSERVATION



OBSERVATION USER MANUAL

Integrated Resource Management Applications
Portal

(<https://irma.nps.gov>)

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2011

Amendment History

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2.0.2	Updates to data editing section and data dictionary with examples of what to type into certain fields. Specifically sections 5.2.2, 5.2.5, 6.1, 9, and 10.8 were updated. Section 5.3.1 was added.	Alison Loar	6/06/2011
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2.1.1	Updated all graphics based on new look of interface. Updated section 6 with new import functionality.	Alison Loar	9/01/2011

Table of Contents

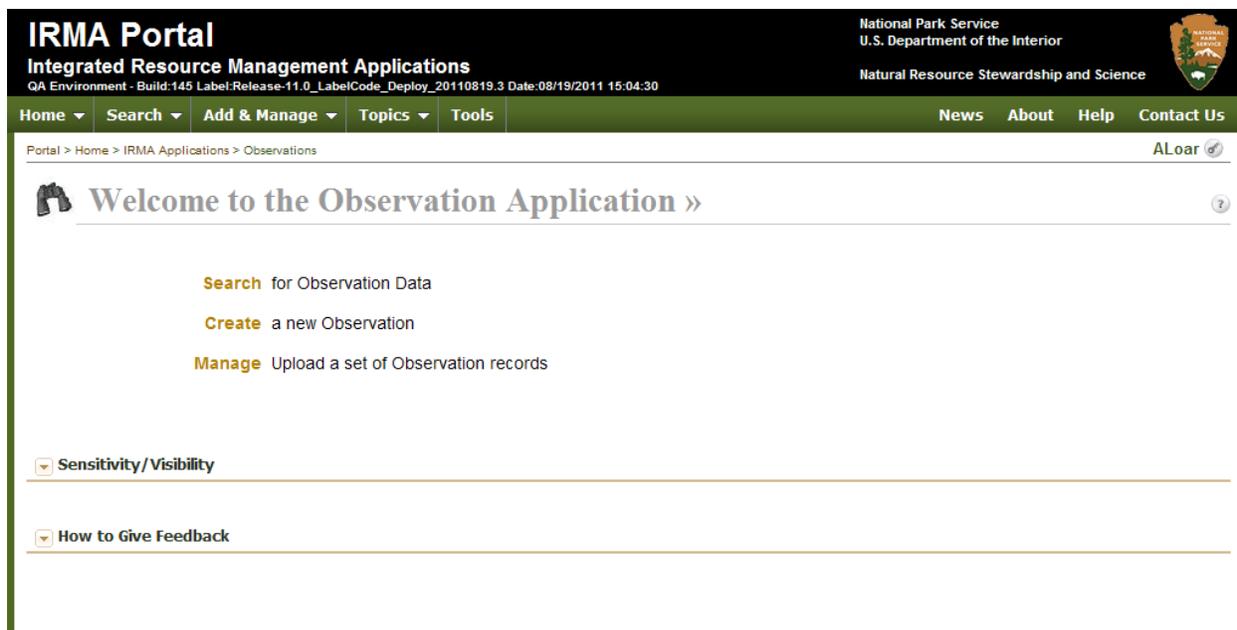
1	Introduction	1
2	Observation Application Basics	1
2.1	What is an observation?	1
2.2	What is the Observation Application?	1
2.2.1	Where do I find the Observation Application?	2
2.3	What is the scope of the Observation Application?	2
2.4	What are the supporting applications used with the Observation Application?	2
2.5	Who manages observation data?	2
2.6	How were data entered?	2
2.7	What is the quality of the information?	3
2.8	What is location identifying information?	3
2.8.1	Who can see location identifying information?	3
3	Searching and Viewing Observation Data	3
3.1	How do I search for observations?	3
3.1.1	Observation Quick Search	4
3.1.2	Observation Search By Code	5
3.2	How do I run another search?	6
3.3	How do I download a set of observation records?	6
3.4	How do I print an observation results table?	6
3.5	How do I see a complete observation record?	6
4	Search Tips and Tricks	7
4.1	Enhanced Text Searching	7
4.2	Single Unit Selector	9
5	Creating and Editing Observation Data	9
5.1	How do I create a new observation record?	9
5.1.1	How do I choose a species for my new observation record?	9
5.1.2	When do I select a park?	11
5.2	When do I enter the rest of the observation record information?	11
5.2.1	What are the sensitivity values?	11
5.2.2	Event Tab	12
5.2.3	How do I enter data into a table in the observation profile?	13
5.2.4	What is the button with the ellipsis (...) for?	13
5.2.5	Location Tab	13
5.2.6	Record Information Tab	14
5.2.7	How do I save my new observation record?	15
5.3	How do I edit an existing observation record?	15
5.3.1	Legacy Fields	16
6	Batch Importing Data	16
6.1	What is the procedure for importing data in batch?	16

6.2	What kind of data may be uploaded?	17
6.2.1	Legacy NPSpecies Working Data Structure	17
6.2.2	New Evidence Template Structure	17
6.2.3	NRDT	17
6.3	What if the file contains data for more than one park?	18
6.4	What if the file contains data for more than one taxonomic category?	18
6.5	How do I check the data file for errors?	19
6.6	How do I upload a data file for import?	19
6.7	What are the importing options?	20
6.8	How do I view data files that have been uploaded?	20
6.9	How do I import the data?	22
7	Visibility of Observation Data	22
7.1	Authenticated vs. Unauthenticated Users	22
7.2	Observations	22
8	Appendix A – Glossary	23
9	Appendix B - Data Dictionary	24
9.1	Observation Fields and Descriptions	24
10	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	29
10.1	What is the Observation Application?	29
10.2	What is the difference between NPSpecies 1.0, NPSpecies 2.x, and NPSpecies 3.x?	29
10.3	How do I link my observation data to a species in a NPSpecies Park-Species List?	29
10.4	Will the public be able to see observation data?	29
10.5	How can I make a correction or add to my park’s observation data?	29
10.6	When will I be able to add or edit information on the IRMA Portal?	29
10.7	Where can I find field definitions?	29
10.8	What are the Legacy fields that appear in the Observation Profile?	30
10.9	Do the Legacy fields need to be filled in for a new record?	30
10.10	Do all the fields need to be filled in?	30

1 Introduction

This document is the comprehensive guide to all of the functionality for the Observation Application. It will be regularly updated as new functionality is added or changed. The glossary, data dictionary, and frequently asked questions may be found in the appendices of this document.

The Observation Application can be accessed from the Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) Portal at <https://irma.nps.gov/App/Evidence/Observation>. This Welcome page provides basic descriptive information about the application and navigation.



2 Observation Application Basics

National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge established in 1999 required a baseline inventory of all vertebrates and vascular plants in all national parks with significant natural resources. As part of the data collection, species observation records were entered as supporting evidence of a species existence at a park. The observation data was initially part of the NPSpecies database and application when it was first made available in 2000. During the NPSpecies redesign the observation data was separated from NPSpecies and made into its own stand alone system to simplify application scope, however direct links from NPSpecies to observations exist.

2.1 What is an observation?

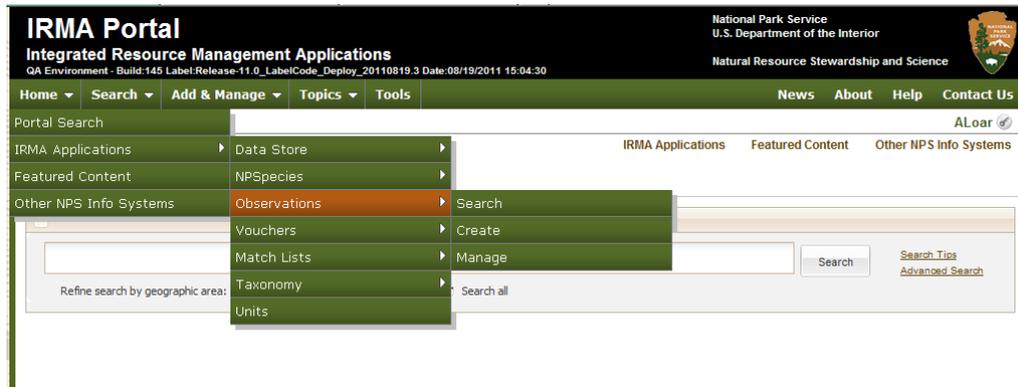
An observation is subjective evidence (no physical proof taken) as to the identity and the location of an organism. The intent of this application is to store observations of taxa for any park unit.

2.2 What is the Observation Application?

The observation database stores observation records of taxa for any park unit and the application makes these records searchable and accessible via the IRMA Portal. The observation records are used as proof that a species exists at a particular park. The records are metadata for a recorded observation, which was made at or near the park. For those with the appropriate permissions the observation data can be added to, and edited.

2.2.1 Where do I find the Observation Application?

- 1) From the main IRMA Portal Page (<https://irma.nps.govApp/Portal>) click on the Home menu.
- 2) Hover your mouse over IRMA Applications and then click on Observations.



2.3 What is the scope of the Observation Application?

Only data about observations recorded on or possibly near parks are stored. The application allows users to search, add and edit these observation records. These records can be used by the NPSpecies application to link observation records to park-species profiles or may be stored here without linking to NPSpecies.

2.4 What are the supporting applications used with the Observation Application?

The Observation Application depends upon several other independent applications:

1. Unit – stores all unit names and their relationships. Units include national park system parks, networks, regions, programs, and offices.
2. Taxonomy – stores all scientific and common names in addition to relationships between names.
3. Template and Reporting – generates all data viewed in tables and supports the download mechanism for the data displayed in those tables.
4. Identity Management – stores minimal information about users and their permission to all applications on the IRMA Portal.

For more information about these applications see their user manuals.

In turn the observation application is one of the supporting applications for NPSpecies, providing records of observations that are used to prove species existence at a park.

2.5 Who manages observation data?

When observations were integrated with NPSpecies the NPSpecies Points of Contact (POCs) were stewards of the observation data along with the NPSpecies data. They may not have entered the data themselves, however they do police who does data entry. For this reason POCs for NPSpecies will all continue to be POCs for the observation data as well.

For data errors found in Observation, NPSpecies or questions about a species in a specific park, please contact the appropriate POC. Click here to [locate the appropriate POC](#).

2.6 How were data entered?

Data were migrated from the original NPSpecies 1.0 database December 2010. Since that time records have been added and modified. Data within NPSpecies 1.0 were entered various ways over the years. Some data

were entered as a result of data mining books, reports, and data sets from park historical records. Other data was entered as a result of targeted field inventories for particular groups of species.

Data mining historic books, reports and field data resulted in species identified with historical taxonomy used at the time of the observation. This should be kept in mind as you search the data for desired species because you may not find the species listed with the most recent accepted taxonomic name.

2.7 What is the quality of the information?

The observation records are not an exhaustive list of all observations taken at a park. In the past the only data entry requirement was to enter the park and species no other information was required, and was not always available. This means that the data is of varying qualities and completeness. Data migrated from the older NPSpecies 1.0 database was marked with a lifecycle of legacy. We ask that POCs and park personnel familiar with the data review these records. Records that are more complete and offer useful information should be moved to a lifecycle state of active. Please help us identify these data gaps and errors by contacting us by email at irma@nps.gov.

2.8 What is location identifying information?

Many observation records also have information that indicates the location that the observation was made, this includes actual x,y point location information, detailed descriptive text which may include Township, Range and Section information, and detailed habitat descriptions. Basically, any field in the database that may contain information to make it possible for someone to find the location where an observation was designated as a location sensitive field.

2.8.1 Who can see location identifying information?

Currently, the observation application records are ONLY visible to individuals with a NPS domain login account (NPS Users). All NPS Users will be able to see the entire set of information (including location information) for all observation records designated as appropriate for NPS staff and the public. Some observation records will require a user to have further permissions before they can see the observation record. If the observation data is made viewable to the public, all location identifying information will be hidden and only records with a non-sensitive designation will be viewable to the public.

For more information on the visibility of observations, please refer to the section below entitled "Visibility of Observation Data".

3 Searching and Viewing Observation Data

There are currently only two search options and two different views of the data. The observation data search results are shown in a table view with a small set of identifying fields displayed. Detailed information for a specific observation record can be seen in the observation profile view which is accessed by clicking on a specific observation record in the search results table.

3.1 How do I search for observations?

There are two search options quick search and search by code. Observation quick search requires a scientific name and the park that the observation was seen in. Search by code requires one or a set of the observation code(s) that are the unique identifier for an observation record. The search by observation code is similar to the search by reference code in the Data Store.

3.1.1 Observation Quick Search

Portal > Home > IRMA Applications > Observations > Search

ALoar

Observation Search

Define Search Criteria

Search Type: Quick

Unit: Acadia National Park (ACAD)

Taxonomic Category: All

Name Type: Scientific

Name: Buteo

Search

To search using the observation quick search follow these steps:

- 1) Select the Search Type of Quick.
- 2) Select the park Unit that you want to find an observation for.
- 3) Optionally, select a specific Taxonomic Category (this can be left as "All").
- 4) Select a Name Type to search, the options are Scientific, Scientific Name with Authority and Common.
- 5) Type in a name or partial name in the Name text box. You must enter at least 2 characters in the Name text field. Complex text strings can be composed using search operators (special characters), see section entitled "Enhanced Text Searching" below for more details.
- 6) Click the Search button to initiate the search.
- 7) A Refine Search table will appear with a list of taxon names that could match the name string you typed in. Any name in the Refine Search table that has observations for the park you select will be hyperlinked.

Portal > Home > IRMA Applications > Observations > Search

ALoar

Observation Search

Define Search Criteria

Search Type: Quick

Unit: Acadia National Park (ACAD)

Taxonomic Category: All

Name Type: Scientific

Name: Buteo

Search

Refine Search

Select Desired Scientific Name

Scientific Name	Common Name	Category	Rank	Classification Source	Code
Buteo jamaicensis	Red-tailed Hawk	Bird	Species	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175350
Buteo lagopus	Roughleg, Rough-legge...	Bird	Species	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175373
Buteo lineatus	Red-shouldered Hawk	Bird	Species	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175359
Buteo platypterus	Broad-winged Hawk	Bird	Species	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175365
Buteo	Buteonine Hawks	Bird	Genus	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175349
Buteo albicaudatus	White-tailed Hawk	Bird	Species	Integrated Taxonomic L...	175360

Hyperlinked Names

Page 1 of 1

Displaying results 1 - 63 of 63

- 8) Click on a hyperlinked scientific name. A results table with observation records for the taxon and the park you choose will appear.

NOTE: If there are no observation records for your particular species name of interest in a park then that name will not be hyperlinked. You may also not see observations for a particular species in a particular park if you do not have permission to see those observations due to their sensitivity level.

3.1.2 Observation Search By Code

Portal > Home > IRMA Applications > Observations > Search ALoar

Observation Search

Define Search Criteria

Search Type: By Observation Code

Code: 147200, 147201

To search using the observation search by code follow these steps:

- 1) Select the Search Type of By Observation Code.
- 2) In the Code text box enter one or more observation code values you are interested in looking at. If you enter more than one code separate the codes by a comma.
- 3) Click the Search button to initiate the search.
- 4) A results table will appear with the observation record or records that you entered codes for. If there are no matches to the codes you entered or you do not have permission to see the records for the codes you entered you will receive a message "No observation records found".

Portal > Home > IRMA Applications > Observations > Search ALoar

Observation Search

Expand Panel to Revise Search Definition

Search Results

Notifications

Disclaimer: This may not be all the observations for this species because all records may not be entered yet or you may not have permission to see sensitive records.

List of Observations

Observation Code	Observation Date	Observer	In Park Boundary	Sensitivity
147200	09/08/1986	S. Major & G. Mittelhauser		Non-Sensitive
147201	09/17/1986	S. Major & G. Mittelhauser		Non-Sensitive

Page 1 of 1 Displaying results 1 - 2 of 2

3.2 How do I run another search?

Once you have run a search and you are ready to run another one select the Expand Panel to Revise Search Definition at the top of the page. You do not need to click the internet browser's back button. Revise your search criteria and click the 'Search' button again.

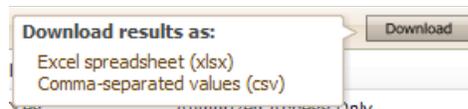
Observation Search



3.3 How do I download a set of observation records?

The list of resulting observation records from a search does not have the complete set of fields and values that are stored for each observation record; however you can download the set of records and data that is displayed.

1. First you must execute a search and return results. See 'Observation Quick Search' or 'Observation Search By Code' as an example.
2. To access the download options click on the 'Download' button icon in the upper right corner of the results table.
3. To download the results click on one of the download options in the list that displays to save results to a file.
4. Select open or save to save this file on your computer.



3.4 How do I print an observation results table?

To print a list of observations from the results table you must first download the list into MS Excel or similar application and then print using MS Excel. It is advisable to format the file prior to printing to meet your needs, such as setting up the page orientation and adjusting column widths. For more help using MS Excel, please refer to the Microsoft website.

3.5 How do I see a complete observation record?

Search results for observation quick search and search by code only show a table with a subset of fields and values that are stored for each observation record. To view an entire observation record you must go to the observation profile view.

- 1) Run a quick search or search by observation code (follow steps in sections 3.1.1 or 3.1.2)
- 2) When the results table displays, look over the table of results to find the record you would like to view in more detail.
- 3) Click on the observation code of the record you have chosen, this will open a new browser window with the observation profile view of the record you have clicked. You will be able to go back to the results table view to look for other observation records that you would like to view in more detail because the results table view is preserved in the original search browser.
- 4) The observation profile has 3 tabs of data, the Events tab, Location Tab and Record Information Tab. There is a data dictionary of all the fields for an observation record in the appendix of this document, go there for more specific information about each field.

4 Search Tips and Tricks

4.1 Enhanced Text Searching

Enhanced text searching is available for some applications in the portal as well as for some web services. With enhanced text searching, input of text as part of a search has certain default behavior. The default search behavior has these elements:

- Searches are case-insensitive.
- Searches are for whole word matches only.
- Extra white space (before, after and between words) does not affect the search results.
- All words entered will be required to be present in the field being searched (equivalent to an AND search).

The search operators (special characters) in the table below can then be used to modify the default search behavior in the portal.

Name:

Operator	Description	What it does	Examples	Tips for portal use
*	Wildcard	Substitutes for any number of characters, including spaces, punctuation or zero characters	*alces alce* al*es	Can be used before, after, or in the middle of a search string. Search strings of few letters, beginning with the wildcard (for example, *us) may be unsuccessful because of long processing time.
?	Single character wildcard	Substitutes for exactly one single character, including a space or punctuation (but not zero characters)	al?es ?lces alce?	Can be used before, after, or in the middle of a search string.
" "	"Phrase search"	Retrieves two or more words in the order specified.	"canis lupus alces"	Wildcards may be used within quotes, but may not return intended results.
^	Field starts with	Requires that the field must start with the specified text string	^canis ^canis* ^"canis lupus"	Use of ^ directly followed by * is not recommended because results are then no longer restricted to the first word in the field (e.g. ^*ruba)
\$	Field ends with	Requires that the field must end with the specified text string	\$canadensis \$*upus \$"alces gigas"	Use of the \$ operator with a text string ending with a wildcard is not recommended because then the results are not limited to the last word of the field (e.g. \$alu*)

=	Entire field exactly matches	Requires that the field must exactly match the specified text string	=lontra ="lontra canadensis"	Do not use the wildcard or the question mark with the = operator. Must use quotes for a phrase.
-	Minus sign (NOT operator)	Excludes a word from the search results	canis -lupus canis NOT lupus	Either the minus sign or the text equivalent <i>NOT</i> may be used. The minus sign must appear immediately before the word to be excluded and be preceded by a space (otherwise it will be interpreted as a hyphen).
	Pipe character (OR operator)	Changes the default search from AND to OR	deer elk deer OR elk	Either the pipe character or the text equivalent <i>OR</i> may be used.
()	Parentheses to order the evaluation of search terms	Forces a group of terms to be evaluated together	canis (albus alces) canis (albus OR alces)	Use with the pipe character (<i>OR</i> operator)
\	Escape character	Removes the operator functionality from a special character	Tinodes provo Ross \& Merkley	Use immediately before a special character
Complex	May combine operators for a very specific search		^lontra (\$sonora \$lataxina)	Some combinations of operators may not make logical sense, so use carefully.

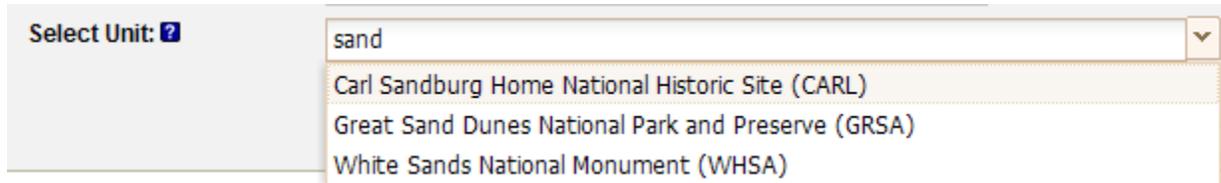
Other tips:

- Searching for common words such as 'in', 'the', or 'of' may give incorrect results. Use quotes for a text string that includes common words.
 - Example: Search for Jack in the Pulpit by entering "jack in the pulpit" – or just enter jack pulpit
 - Example: Search for Star of India by entering "star of india" – or just enter star india
- You may enter parentheses that are part of a name. Parentheses as part of the text string, without the OR operator, will be treated as regular text. However, it is not necessary to include the parentheses.
 - Example: Entering Aradus (Quilnus) will give the same results as Aradus Quilnus
- Punctuation (such as periods, commas or hyphens) does not need to be entered in the text string to get the correct results.
 - Example: Entering Abies var. will give the same results as Abies var
 - Example: Entering Alces Gray, 1821 will give the same results as Alces Gray 1821
 - Example: Entering black-footed ferret will give the same results as black footed ferret
- A possessive form of a name should be entered using the apostrophe.
 - Example: Search for Nava's wren by entering Nava's wren
- Some other special characters in the data may give incorrect results. In most cases, a search will be more efficient without the inclusion of these characters in the text string. The escape character \ as described in the table above may also be used.

- Example: Search for Tinodes provo Ross & Merkley, 1950 by simply entering Tinodes provo Ross Merkley
- Example: Search for Tinodes provo Ross & Merkley, 1950 by entering Tinodes provo Ross \& Merkley

4.2 Single Unit Selector

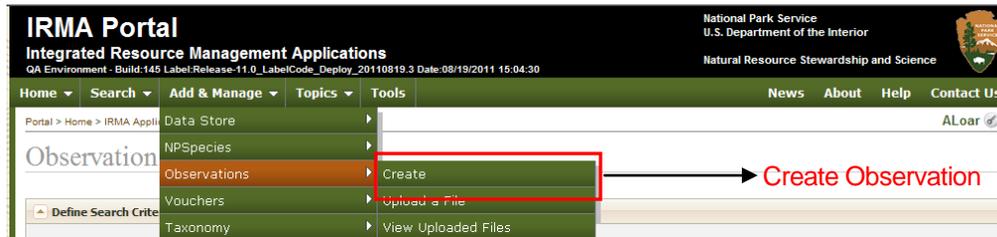
The single unit selector (simple drop down menu) allows you to choose a single unit to be included in a set of search criteria. You may start typing a Unit Name or Code and the drop down list will be filtered to those that match.



5 Creating and Editing Observation Data

5.1 How do I create a new observation record?

To create a new observation record, go to the Add & Manage menu, hover over Observations. Click on the Create link.



You will then be lead through choosing a species and park that the observation record will be for. The images and instructions below will describe the steps for choosing a species and park.

5.1.1 How do I choose a species for my new observation record?

When the create voucher link is clicked the first screen to appear is the Select Taxon screen (below). This screen contains three collapsible panels, with the first two being expanded. In most cases, the taxon is likely to already exist in our system. Therefore, you should always search for the taxon by scientific name to see if it already exists within our database.

Select Taxon

Instructions

- Search for a taxon on the Search for Existing taxon panel.
- If you are unable to find an existing taxon that meets your needs, expand the Create New Taxon panel and click the Create Taxon button.

Search for Existing Taxon

- Search for a taxon by scientific name by typing the name into the text box.
- Two characters will perform an "exact" match.
- Three or more characters will perform a "starts with"

Search by scientific name:

Create New Taxon

By typing in at least three letters in the Search by scientific name dropdown, you initiate a search for names that begin with the specified text that you entered. A list of possible results is returned. This list will narrow as you continue to type.

Search for Existing Taxon

- Search for a taxon by scientific name by typing the name into the text box.
- Two characters will perform an "exact" match.
- Three or more characters will perform a "starts with"

Search by scientific name:

canis lu

Canis lupus Linnaeus, 1758. Mammal. ITIS. Species-93337

Canis lupus albus Kerr, 1792. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632221

Canis lupus alces Goldman, 1941. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632224

Canis lupus arabs Pocock, 1934. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632226

Canis lupus arctos Pocock, 1935. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632228

canis lupus asdif. Mammal. IRMA Animals. Subspecies-769052

Canis lupus baileyi Nelson and Goldman, 1929. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632230

Canis lupus baileyi. Mammal. NPSpecies Semi-perm.. Subspecies-156582

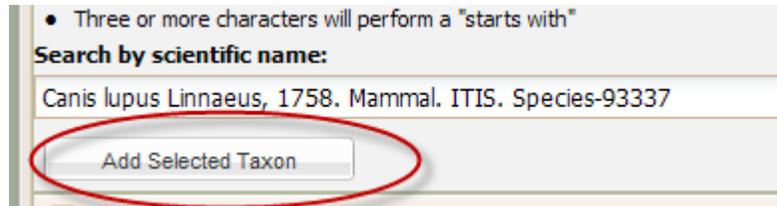
Canis lupus beothucus G. M. Allen and Barbour, 1937. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632232

Canis lupus bernardi Anderson, 1943. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632234

Canis lupus campestris Dwigubski, 1804. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632236

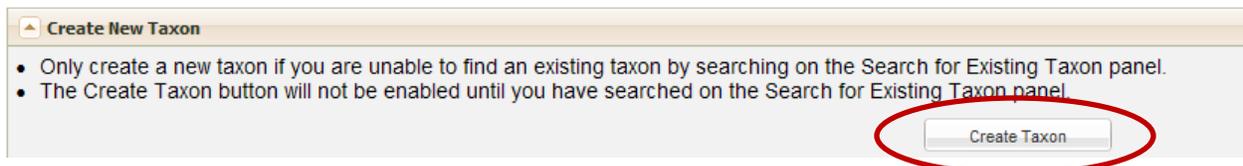
Canis lupus chanco Gray, 1863. Mammal. ITIS. Subspecies-632238

There will often be a number of taxa to choose from. When in doubt, it is recommended that you select name from ITIS. Click on the scientific name from the dropdown list to select it. Then click the Add Selected Taxon button to use the selected name for your new record.



If, after searching for a taxon, you discover that it does not exist, your other option is to create a new taxon. If you decide to go this route, please click the Create Taxon button in the Create New Taxon panel and see the help provided here:

<https://irma.nps.gov/Content/help/Taxonomy/Create.aspx>



5.1.2 When do I select a park?

The single unit selector will appear after you have chosen a taxon. The list of parks in the single unit selector will only have parks that you have permission to add or edit records for.

5.2 When do I enter the rest of the observation record information?

Once a species has been selected or created and a park has been selected an edit profile view appears so that the rest of the observation record information can be entered. This view looks very similar to the observation profile view, but all the information is blank and can be added.

5.2.1 What are the sensitivity values?

The only other required field (beside from species name and park) is the sensitivity field. The sensitivity value helps determine the visibility of the record to users. This value must be chosen, below are the three sensitivity values, their definitions and what users are allowed to see records with that value.

- Non-Sensitive – the record has no sensitive information and can be viewed by anyone including the public.
- Authorized Access Only – The record is visible to all NPS staff, partners, contractors and cooperators but is not visible to the general public.
- Sensitive – This record has information that is sensitive and can only be viewed by, park staff that are given sensitive reader status for the park the record is for, or are editor or POC for the park the record is for.

The sensitivity values are set at the top of the edit profile view in the Unique Identifiers panel.

Unique Observation Identifiers

Code:

Unit: Zion National Park (ZION)

Scientific Name: *Agave palmeri*

Sensitivity: Non-Sensitive Authorized Access Only Sensitive

5.2.2 Event Tab

The edit profile will open with the Event Tab on display. This tab is where the collection date and time can be entered, as well as the collector(s). Fields that hold other general information about the observation are displayed on this page such as the habitat the observation was seen and the physical description of the observed species. Legacy fields may be ignored on this screen for new records; these fields should not be present in this view.

Event Information | Location Information | Record Information

Documented Scientific Name:

Observer(s)

Legacy Observer(s):

Legacy Observer ID:

	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix	Observer ID	Title	+ Add

Date/Time of Observation

Date Observed:

Legacy End Date: No Data

Time Observed:

Habitat

General Habitat:

Montane/Alpine Upland Wetland

Riparian Oceanic/Coastal Lotic (Flowing Water)

Lentic (Standing Water) Barren Other

Specific Habitat:

Habitat Comments:

Physical Description

Count:

Age:

Sex: Male Female Hermaphrodite Unknown

Observation Method:

Trapped Auditory

Road Kill Visual with Naked Eye

Visual with Binoculars or Scope Visual and Auditory

Roadside Observation Animal Sign, i.e. tracks or scat

Sign of Animal Activity, i.e. den or dam

Comments:

5.2.3 How do I enter data into a table in the observation profile?

Observer data is displayed and entered in the observer table on the events tab. Table data entry makes it possible to enter more than one value for a particular observation record, so an observation can have multiple observers associated with the observation recorded.

- 1) To add a new record to a table click on the text reading "+Add" at the top right of the table. This action creates a new row in the table for you to enter information into.
- 2) Click in each cell to enter the information you have.
- 3) To add another new record click on the "+Add" text again.

5.2.4 What is the button with the ellipsis (...) for ?

There are a number of comment (or detail) fields in the observation edit profile. These fields allow you to enter up to 4000 characters. In order for you to see all the text that is typed for a comment field a text box pop up was provided. Anywhere a button with an ellipsis (...) appears you can click on that ellipsis button and a larger text box pop up appears. Note: Do not put html tags in these fields (i.e. `<html>`).



5.2.5 Location Tab

The Location Tab is where information about the location an observation was made is entered. There is an option of entering a detailed description of the location using directions and landmark descriptions, as well as fields for entering coordinates, elevation and whether the observation occurred within or outside the park boundary.

Coordinates can only be entered in latitude, longitude at this time. In the future the location tab will have the option of entering coordinates in other projections as well as the option to click a point on a map displayed on the tab to indicate the observation point.

Legacy fields may be ignored on this screen for new records; these fields should not be present in this view.

Event Information | **Location Information** | Record Information

Location Description

Description:

Local Location Code:

Elevation: Feet Meters

In Park Boundary: Yes No
 Unknown

Comments:

Geospatial Attributes

Enter Only Latitude, Longitude Coordinates with Datum WGS84:

Latitude: Longitude: Coordinate Error:

Legacy Coordinates

Datum:
Latitude (DD):
Longitude (DD):
UTM X:
UTM Y:
UTM Zone:
Coordinate Error:

5.2.6 Record Information Tab

The record information tab includes general comments and data source for the observation record, including who and when the record was created and last modified. Entered By and Last Modified By are completed by the system as the records are created or edited.

Event Information | Location Information | **Record Information**

General Comments and Data Source

Comments:

Data Source:

Reference Code:

Online Link:

Project:

Source Database:

RecordID:

Record History

Created By:
Created Date:
Last Modified By:
Last Modified Date:

5.2.7 How do I save my new observation record?

Once you have completed entering information the record can be saved. There are a few available states that the record can be saved as:

- Active – This means the record information is completely entered and is ready to be viewed by all who have permission for see active records.
- Draft – This means that some data still needs to be entered or confirmed before all can see the record.

To save the record scroll to the bottom of the profile, there you will find a series of buttons, click the button with the state you want to save you observation record to (Draft or Active). This will save the record and set the state at the same time.



NOTICE: There is an option to cancel. Click on Cancel if you do not want to save the information you have just entered. No record will be made and you will not be able to find this record in a search; it will not exist!

5.3 How do I edit an existing observation record?

To edit an existing observation record you must first search for the record you want to edit using the observation search options. For instructions on how to use the observation search options go to section 3.1.

- 1) Run an observation quick search or observation search by code to get a list of observation records in the observation results table.
- 2) Select a record from the observation results table and open up the observation profile view. If you have permission to edit the observation record you are looking at then there will be hyperlinked text in the upper left of the profile reading [Edit Profile](#).
- 3) Click on the [Edit Profile](#) link.
- 4) The Edit Observation Profile view will load and be ready for edits.

The Edit Observation Profile view looks the same as the create observation profile and has the same tabs for data entry. There are two main differences between create and edit. First, you will not be able change the species name or park that the observation record is for when editing an existing record. Second, when saving the record there will be different lifecycle state options available to you depending the current state of the record.

There will be the option to Inactivate the record, save as Active, save as Draft (if it is currently a draft record) or save as Legacy (if it is currently a legacy record).

- Inactive – record is no longer visible to most readers, soft delete. It can still be seen if linked to an NPSpecies record.
- Legacy – this state was given to all records that were migrated from the original NPSpecies 1.0 database in Oracle. These records are visible to all who have the proper permissions but may not have complete information. POCs have the option to gradually change these records to active or keep these as legacy.

- Active – This means the record information is completely entered and is ready to be viewed by all who have permission for see active records. All information from legacy fields are correctly reflected in the new fields. A complete record still may not have all the fields filled in.
- Draft – This means that some data still needs to be entered or confirmed before all can see the record. Only records currently set to Draft can be saved as draft again.

There is also the option to cancel your changes. Clicking on Cancel will take you back to the Observation Profile View and no data changes that you made while in edit will be saved.

5.3.1 Legacy Fields

Some fields provided are from NPSpecies 1.0 and are called legacy fields. Legacy fields were used to store information in their original format so that they may be used to populate new fields. For example, Legacy Observer(s) and Legacy Observer ID were free form text fields in NPSpecies 1.0. An attempt was made in the final migration of data to parse information from these fields into the new observer(s) table.

All legacy field information will need to be checked in the new fields to ensure data migrated properly. This check can only be done using human eyes. No more automation can be programmed for this task. If the data did not migrate properly, those data will need to be correctly added/updated in the new fields.

WASO will be contacting each POC to devise a plan to help get these new fields correctly populated from the legacy fields.

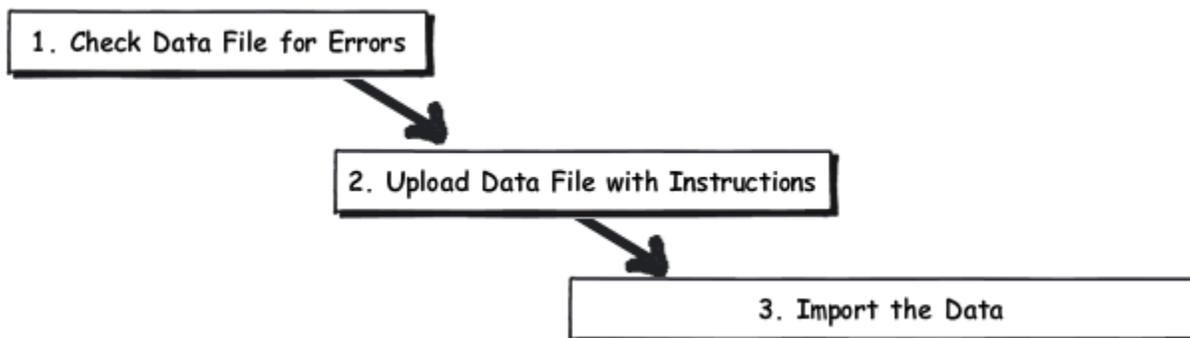
6 Batch Importing Data

Voucher data is often entered into an Excel spreadsheet or MS Access database on a biologist's desktop computer. To avoid extra work of requiring entry through the create voucher portal interface there is also an option to submit these files for POCs to import into the voucher database. Only POCs will have access to the voucher file upload page.

6.1 What is the procedure for importing data in batch?

It is highly recommended to do all data entry in the online version of the Observation application rather than the legacy desktop version. However, you may have legacy desktop data files that need data loaded online. Follow these procedures to get those data out of the legacy desktop and into the online version the Observation application.

To import Observation data you must follow three basic steps 1) check the data file for errors, 2) upload a data file to holding area with importing instructions, and 3) import data from uploaded file.



POCs may upload data files for their parks and import the data into Observation database.

6.2 What kind of data may be uploaded?

The import process is automated so there are some rigid requirements of data and formatting in order for the import process to work correctly. The file and format requirements are outlined below.

- 1) The data MUST include the Park Code.
- 2) The data MUST also include a field that has a clean scientific name or ITIS TSN. Clean refers to no embedded non name text other than spp. and var. for subspecies and varieties.
- 3) Coordinates will need to be entered in decimal degree Lat, Long using the datum WGS84. Use the tblObservation, tblVouchers existing lat, long fields for converted coordinates. If data are not converted the UTM coordinates will be places in the legacy UTM fields.
 - a. There is a coordinate conversion tool developed by the NRGIS Team that can be used to convert UTM coordinates to lat, long. The tool is located at:
<http://science.nature.nps.gov/NRGIS/applications/dbaseapps/coordtransform.aspx>.

6.2.1 Legacy NPSpecies Working Data Structure

MS Access

The only data structure supported at this time is the legacy NPSpecies MS Access desktop table structure. This data file comes in MS Access 97 format and may be converted up to a newer version (up to Access 2007) for making minor edits to the data prior to uploading. The legacy NPSpecies MS Access desktop user interface is not needed for uploading data, however it may be used to make edits to the data prior to uploading the file.

The legacy NPSpecies desktop working data file structure can be found here:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/apps/npspp/workingdata.cfm>

From the IRMA Observation application, upload an MS Access 2007 file or lower (.mbd or .accdb) data file with new observations.

Excel

Currently unsupported, must insert the data back into the MS Access NPSpecies desktop working data file prior to uploading file.

Future version – If the file is in Excel the first row MUST have column headers and the column headers must map to fields in NPSpecies desktop working data file tblVouchers or tblObservations. Only one worksheet may be populated.

6.2.2 New Evidence Template Structure

Currently unsupported, available at the end of September 2011

The template can be downloaded from here:

<http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/im/inventory/npspecies/docs/EvidenceTemplate.zip>

6.2.3 NRDT

Currently unsupported, however development of this functionality is scheduled for Spring 2012.

6.3 What if the file contains data for more than one park?

You have two options 1) select a park unit, upload the file with data for more than one park, then during the upload and import processes only data for the selected park will be used. All other data for other parks will be ignored. For the next park, upload the same data file again, and then import its data. Repeat this for each park in the data file you want to import. Or 2) split the data file into multiple legacy NPSpecies working data files using the steps below prior to uploading the data file. When using this procedure you will be uploading a file for a single park only. Repeat this process for all the parks you want to import data.

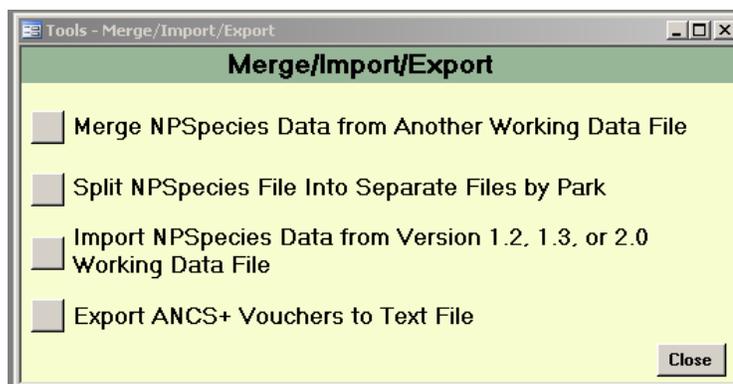
Splitting your legacy NPSpecies working data file by park

Prior to uploading the file, use the Split NPSpecies File into Separate Files by Park tool in the desktop user interface. Tip: You'll need a copy of a [blank working data](#) file when you get to step 5 below.

1. To do this open the user interface for the legacy NPSpecies desktop file.
2. Click the Tools button under Utilities on the main menu.



3. Select the Merge/Import/Export option.
4. Click the button to the left of "Split NPSpecies File Into Separate Files By Park" option.



5. Follow the instructions provided by that wizard.

6.4 What if the file contains data for more than one taxonomic category?

If your original legacy NPSpecies MS Access working data file contains data for more than one taxonomic category that is ok, you do not need to split the data file up. Simply upload the file once and import all the data as it is.

6.5 How do I check the data file for errors?

ATTENTION VERY IMPORTANT!

Prior to uploading a data file please use the helper SOP and database to check your data file for errors. The SOP instructs how to set up links to your data file from the helper database and provides a standard set of queries to assist in finding errors. Any errors should be corrected in your data file prior to uploading the data file.

The preprocessing tool can be found here:

<https://somewhere.nps.gov>

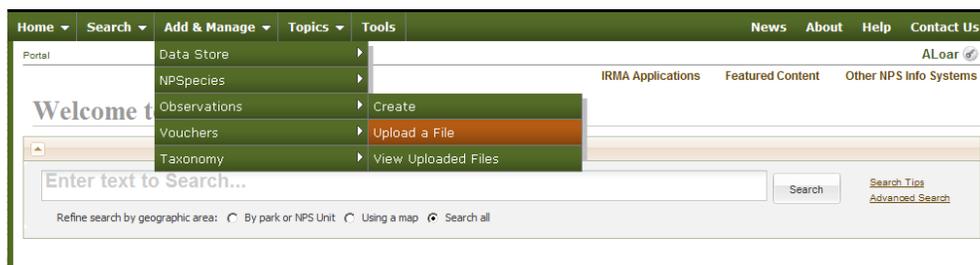
The preprocessing instructions can be found here:

<http://somewhereelse.nps.gov>

6.6 How do I upload a data file for import?

First remember that only POCs will have access to the upload page.

No matter where on the IRMA portal you find yourself, you can upload a data file from the green bar at the top of the page by selecting Add & Manage, click on Observations, and then click the Upload a File option.



After selecting Upload a File you will come to a page where you can select the file from your computer or network location. Follow these four simple steps.

1. Select a Unit.
2. Click Select Files button to select the file you want to upload.
3. Provide instructions to importing the data within the selected file.
4. Click Finish button to upload file and instructions.

The Finish button will save your uploaded file and instructions, then will run an automated check to ensure your uploaded file meets certain structural requirements. This step is called pre-validation.

1. If this pre-validation fails due to inconsistencies between your importing instructions and the data you provided, you should change your importing instructions (i.e. request to Append Observation, when there are none in the uploaded file).

If this pre-validation fails due to problems with your uploaded file not meeting the structural requirements (i.e. file is not an MS Access NPSpecies working data file), then you will be required to you will be required to correct the data issues in the original file, and then re-upload the data file.

Once the tasks are completed successfully you'll be taken to the Manage Uploaded Files page where you may import the data into the Observation database.

The screenshot shows a web interface for uploading files to update observation data. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Search, Add & Manage, Topics, Tools, News, About, Help, and Contact Us. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: Portal > Home > IRMA Applications > Observations > Manage > Submit Uploads. The main heading is "Upload a File to Update Observation Data".

Instructions:

- Select a Unit.
- Click Browse button to select the file you want to upload.
- Provide instructions to importing the data within the selected file.
- Click finish button to upload file and instructions.

Select Unit: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park (ABLI)

Browse for File:

Name	Status	Size	Progress
Total: 0 0 KB of 0 KB			

Select File

Provide Import Instructions:

Observation Instructions for Importing Uploaded Data:

Append

Linking NPSpecies records to new Evidence (Optional):

Link Observations to NPSpecies

Finish the Upload: Finish

6.7 What are the importing options?

Currently, the only importing option available is to add new observations. Only include observations that have not been entered. The system has no way to identify one observation from another and will treat all incoming observations as new records. A future version will enable updating the content of existing observations online.

Link Observations to NPSpecies

If this is checked all observations imported will also be linked to NPSpecies Park-Species Profiles. This step will be skipped if this box is left unchecked. Leave this box unchecked ONLY if you do NOT want to associate these vouchers as evidence for your park-species profiles (this is rare). If a voucher is for a species that is not yet on the park-species list in NPSpecies this step will add it.

6.8 How do I view data files that have been uploaded?

No matter where on the IRMA portal you find yourself, you can view upload data files. From the green bar at the top of the page select Add & Manage, click on Observations, and then click the View Uploaded Files option.



From the View Uploaded files page previously uploaded files may be managed at any stage of their lifecycle from uploaded through imported.

View Import Instructions

Clicking this link provides a popup with a summary of the import instructions.

Validate File

This link executes a thorough data validation of the data and tables within the uploaded file and determines whether the data will cleanly import into the Voucher database.

- If the data file passes validation the import option will be enabled on the next screen.
- If the uploaded file does not pass this validation on the next screen, then the original data file must be corrected on your hard drive and re-uploaded. A detailed list of issues by table/column/row will be generated by the system that is to be used to make the necessary corrections for the data to pass validation. It is recommended that you delete the version of the uploaded file that fails this validation as the system cannot use it. See the section called Delete File below for details.

Import File

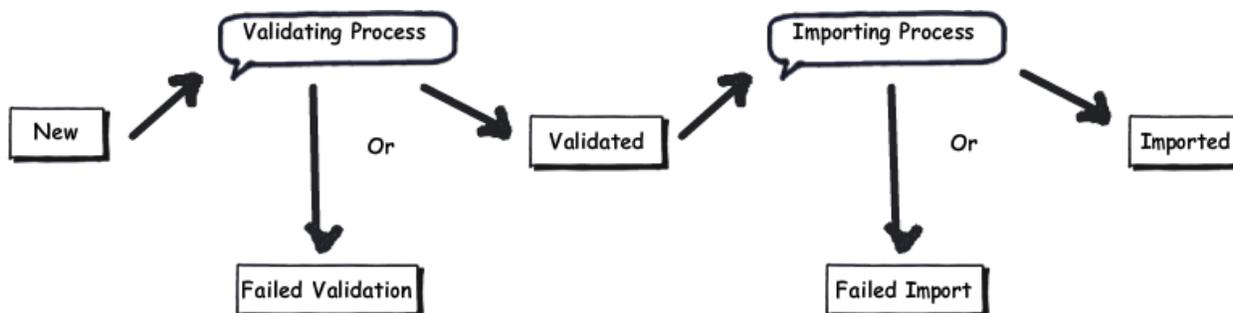
Clicking this link will execute the data validation (even if it has already been run) and then execute the import of data within the uploaded file into the Voucher database. Once the import has been completed a summary will display of what was imported.

Delete File

This link deletes the uploaded file regardless if its data has been imported or not. A confirmation message will display.

Status

This is the lifecycle status of the uploaded file. This diagram displays all the status values and processing that initiates the status changes.



- When a file is newly uploaded its status is “New”.
- When a file is running through its validation process it will either fail this validation or complete successfully. If the file fails this validation, then the file should be deleted as the system cannot use it for importing data. The original file on your hard drive or network share must be corrected, then re-uploaded and sent through the validation again. Failing validation usually means there is a problem with the data in the uploaded file that will prevent it from being imported.
- If this validation passes successfully the uploaded file is in a “Validated” status and is a candidate for running through the import process.
- When the file is being run through the import process it will either complete successfully or it will not. If the uploaded file does not import, the uploaded file will be in a “Failed Import” state. Failing the import process usually means that something out of your control happened during the import process such as losing your network connection. You may try to run the import process again and it should import the data just fine.
- Once the file is in an “Imported” status, you have a choice to keep the uploaded file here for tracking purposes of imported files or you can choose to delete the file as the system no longer needs it.

6.9 How do I import the data?

After clicking on the Import link on the View Uploaded Files page, you'll be taken to the Validating Observation Data for Import page. A validation of the data will occur for two tables (tblObservations and if necessary tblNegTaxUnits); each column/and row in the data file is evaluated.

If the validation passes and you have permission to import, then the Import button is enabled. Click the "Import" button to import the data within the uploaded file for the park selected. This button will be grayed out if the data validation does not pass. If there are data validation errors, then the original data file needs to be corrected on your hard drive, re-upload the file, then re-validate/import the data. If even one application does not pass the validation, then NO data are imported. The entire data file must pass the data validation for any data to be imported (it's a related package of information).

Next Steps

Once you successfully import your observations and optionally link the data to park-species profiles in NPSpecies it is recommended to spot check those records. If there are any additional observers for the new observations, please add those at this time. Your records were imported with a “legacy” lifecycle state because the data coming in was in an older structure.

7 Visibility of Observation Data

7.1 Authenticated vs. Unauthenticated Users

Authenticated users are those that are recognized by the IRMA Portal. Unauthenticated users are those that are not recognized by the IRMA Portal. Authenticated users are those using an NPS computer and may have elevated permissions to take particular actions within an application on the IRMA Portal (i.e. edit data in Observation for ROMO).

7.2 Observations

Access to observation data was assigned based on users past access to NPSpecies 1.0 data. Users that had edit access to specified parks or networks were granted that same access in the observation application. In the past a login had to be given to a user in order for them to have access to NPSpecies and observation data, now users with NPS active directory accounts will automatically have access to the IRMA portal and a subset of observation data by default, as long as they have logged onto a NPS computer. Below is a summary of different user access.

- Unauthenticated or Public Users – Observation records will not be visible to unauthenticated or public users at this time.
- NPS or Authenticated Users – By default all NPS Authenticated users will have access to observation records that have a sensitivity value of Non-sensitive or Authorized Access Only. Added permission will give authenticated users greater access to observation records.
 - Reader Access to Sensitive Records – This is an added permission granted to users. Users are granted read access to records designated as sensitive. This is granted based on park so users can see all records for parks they have this elevated read access to but will not see sensitive records for the rest of the parks they have not been given access to.
 - Edit Access – This is an added permission that can be assigned to a user. Users are granted edit access to all records, regardless of sensitivity value for specified parks. Users will only have the default access to records for parks that they do not have edit access to.
 - POCs – POCs have the same access as editors, also based on assigned parks, in addition POCs are able to upload files for a batch import of observation records and will be able to add or remove user permission to the observation application, in the future.

8 Appendix A – Glossary

Category

A grouping of taxa; categories may come from the classification source that provided a taxon (i.e. USDA Plants Categories) or they may be added by a separate organization (i.e. NPSpecies Categories). An example of an NPSpecies Category is "Birds".

Classification Source

A classification source is a provider of Taxonomy records. In the current Taxonomy Application, there are three Classification Sources: the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), NPSpecies Semi-permanent Names (Taxonomy records added by the NPSpecies system owner), and NPSpecies Temporary Names (Taxonomy records added by the NPSpecies user community). USDA Plants will be added as a classification source in a future version of the Taxonomy application.

ITIS

See Classification source.

Kingdom

A taxonomic rank, typically recognized as the highest rank in biological taxonomy. Typically five or six kingdoms are recognized. An example of a kingdom is Plantae, the plant kingdom.

Observation

An observation is subjective evidence (no physical proof taken) as to the identity and the location of an organism. Observations are managed within the Observation application. Some observations may be linked to NPSpecies Park Species records and some may not.

POC

Point of Contact designated by each park, network, and region to be the single "gatekeeper" and coordinator for data entered into NPSpecies. POCs for each park are designated in writing by the park superintendent through Inventory & Monitoring (I&M) network Board of Directors and other mechanisms. In the majority of cases, the I&M Data Manager for an I&M Network is the POC for all parks in the network, although some large parks have designated their own POC.

Rank

An indicator of position within a taxonomic hierarchy. Common ranks in order from highest to lowest include kingdom, division or phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. Other ranks exist between these ranks and below species, but are less commonly used.

Repository

A museum, herbarium or other designated storage area for voucher specimens.

Taxa/Taxon

A taxonomic group or entity. Each record in the Taxonomy application is considered a taxon. Taxa is the plural of taxon.

Taxa/Taxon Code

A unique identifier for a taxon in the Taxonomy application. It is in the form of a positive integer.

Taxon Display Citation

A shortened notation that describes a taxon in the following format:

CategoryName.ScientificName.ClassificationSourceName.RankName-TaxonCode[LifecycleState].

Taxonomic Hierarchy

A Taxonomic Hierarchy is a listing showing the placement of a taxon and its parentage in descending order by rank; typically all the way to kingdom for biological nomenclature.

Taxonomy

Taxonomy is the science and practice of classification, arranging taxa in hierarchies by ranks following a parent-child relationship.

Taxonomic Serial Number (TSN)

See Code.

Voucher

A voucher is physical evidence used to confirm identity and prove an organism was found in a particular location. Forms of physical evidence include a voucher specimen at a museum or herbarium (including whole or piece of organism), photo image (i.e. digital or harpcopy), or etc. Vouchers are managed within the Voucher application. Some vouchers may be linked to NPSpecies Park Species records and some may not.

9 Appendix B - Data Dictionary

9.1 Observation Fields and Descriptions

Profile Tab	Label	Definition
Unique Observation Identifiers	Observation Code	Unique code identifying each observation record.
	Unit	The park or park unit that the observation is linked to. The observation does not need to have been collected within the park boundary but should have been collected within close proximity.
	Standard Scientific Name	The complete scientific name of a taxonomic unit. The Standard Scientific Name can be of any rank (e.g. species, genus, family, etc. - see <i>Rank</i> below). There are

		three sources of Standard Scientific Name, as with <i>TSNs</i> .
	Sensitivity	Security level based on the sensitivity of this particular observation record.
	Non Sensitive	No access restrictions
	Privileged	Restricted to National Park Service staff, partners, contractors and cooperators.
	Sensitive	Restricted to park staff specified in Park Code
	Lifecycle Status	The life cycle status describes the state of the observation record; a record can be Active, Inactive, Draft or Legacy.
	Active	Data entry for this record is considered complete, no more review or data checks are needed. All information from legacy fields are correctly reflected in the new fields. This does not mean that the record cannot be edited if data need to be updated or corrected it just means that at this time the record is considered complete.
	Inactive	Inactive is considered a soft delete. The record is still in the database but has been removed from visibility because the record is out dated, incomplete or in accurate.
	Draft	The record data entry has not been completed, more information either needs to be entered or the record was entered by an intern and needs to be reviewed before being marked as active.
	Legacy	A legacy record is one that has been migrated from the original NPSpecies 1.0 database. This data may or may not be complete. These records can be changed to active if they are considered complete.
Event Tab	Documented Scientific Name	Scientific name that was documented when the species was observed.
	Legacy Observer(s)	Name(s) of observer(s) that were entered in the NPSpecies 1.0 application. These data are being migrated to a new database schema, so the "legacy" values were preserved to confirm correct migration.
	Legacy ObserverID	The original ID assigned to the observation by the observer at the time of observation. These data are being migrated to a new database schema, so the "legacy" values were preserved to confirm correct migration.
	Observer Name	Name of observer.
	Observer ID	The original ID assigned to the observation by the observer at the time of observation.
	Observer Title	The observers title at time of the observation (i.e. Biologist)
	Observer Affiliation	The affiliation of the observer at the time of the observation. (i.e. Yellowstone National Park). Submit additional affiliations needed to irma@nps.gov

	Date observed	Date that the observation was made. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When Month/Year is selected a dropdown list of month options will appear as well as a text box for providing a four digit year (YYYY). When Year, Winter, Spring, Summer, or Fall are selected a text box displays for providing a four digit year (YYYY). If the data was migrated from NPSpecies 1.0 the Date Observed, may be the beginning of a date range if the exact date could not be determined.
	Legacy End Date	The end date of a date-range if the exact date of the observation was unknown. This is only a legacy field and holds end dates for dates where an exact date could not be determined and so a date range was entered.
	Time	Time of observation (12-hour clock). (i.e. 01:30 PM)
	General Habitat	Keyword selected to describe the general habitat the observation was collected in.
	Specific Habitat	Keyword selected to more specifically describe the habitat the observation was collected in.
	Habitat	Description of habitat where collection was made.
	Count	The number of individuals that were collected.
	Age	Age is individual collected, if determined.
	Sex	Sex of individual, if determined and if animal.
	Observation Method	What method was used to observe the species (i.e. Auditory, Trapped, Road Kill, Visual with Binoculars of Scope).
	Observation Method Comments	Notes associated with the type of observation method recorded.
Location Tab	Description	Concise description of observation site within the park.
	Local Location Code	An optional code identifying a permanent locally recognized location where the observation was made.
	Elevation	Elevation where observation was made.
	Elevation Units	Units for elevation (feet or meters).
	In Park Boundary	Yes/No/Unknown whether the observation was seen inside the park boundary.
	In Park Boundary Details	Any comments or notes associated with the determination of whether the observation was made from within or outside the park boundary. When an In Park Boundary is No or Unknown it is encouraged to have a comment explaining why.

	Latitude	New coordinate field. Stores data in decimal degrees (i.e. 44.02). Only two decimal places are necessary.
	Longitude	New coordinate field. Stores data in decimal degrees (i.e. -110.14). Only two decimal places are necessary.
	Coordinate Error	See coordinate error field under legacy coordinates for now. This field migrated properly from NPSpecies 1.0 and should display next to the new latitude and longitude fields, however it is a bug that it is missing and no new coordinate errors may be entered at this time.
(Legacy Coordinates)		All the coordinates are being preserved from the migrated legacy data and can be viewed in the Legacy Coordinates Panel of the Location Tab. Coordinates will also be converted to Latitude, Longitude WGS 84 for the purposes of mapping the coordinates. All new coordinates will be stored in Latitude, Longitude as well.
	Latitude(DD)	Latitude in decimal degrees where the observation was made.
	Longitude(DD)	Longitude in decimal degrees where the observation was made.
	UTM X	UTM X coordinate (easting) where the observation was made.
	UTM Y	UTM Y coordinate (northing) where the observation was made.
	UTM Zone	UTM Zone of X and Y coordinates for the collection.
	UTM Datum	Datum for UTM coordinates (i.e. NAD27 or NAD83).
	Coordinate Error (meters)	Estimated accuracy of the location coordinates in meters.
Record Information	Comments	Any general comments about the observation and observation record.
	Data Source	The data source of the observation record, if known.
	Reference Code	This used to be BIBKeyID, but with NatureBib retired and the Reference application taking its place this field was changed to Reference Code. This field holds any reference code that may be a citation of study were the observation was made.
	Source Database	If the observation record comes from some other database than the database name can be entered here. (i.e Visitor observation database for Yellowstone).
	RecordID	This is the unique ID for the observation in the database named in the Source Database Field.
	Online Link	If there is an online link to other information about the observation it can be inserted here.
	Project	If the observation was collected as part of a larger project the project name can be entered here.

	Created By	This information is tracked internally and filled in by the system. The user that creates the observation record will be entered here.
	Created Date	This information is tracked internally and filled in by the system. The date that the observation record is created will be saved in this field
	Last Modified By	This information is tracked internally and filled in by the system. The last user to edit the observation record will be entered in this field.
	Last Modified Date	This information is tracked internally and filled in by the system. The last date that the observation record has been edited will be entered in this field.

10 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

10.1 What is the Observation Application?

The Observation Application Stores and manages observation data that was once part of NPSpecies 1.0. Observation data stored in the new Observation Application can be used as evidence for NPSpecies 3.0 species list but does not have to be.

10.2 What is the difference between NPSpecies 1.0, NPSpecies 2.x, and NPSpecies 3.x?

The NPSpecies 1.0 is the original online silo version of NPSpecies that is being rebuilt using web services. NPSpecies 2.x is a temporary transition read-only version that is accessible from the IRMA Portal and over time will include more and more functionality as it goes through iterative software design. NPSpecies 1.0 will be decommissioned in 2010, at that time NPSpecies 3.x will take the place of NPSpecies 1.0.

10.3 How do I link my observation data to a species in a NPSpecies Park-Species List?

This is done through the NPSpecies Application.

- 1) Go to the Biology Tab and find the NPSpecies Application Panel.
- 2) Click on Search in the NPSpecies Application Panel.
- 3) Choose the following Parameters:
 - a. Search Type: Park-Species Profile
 - b. Search: Park-Species Quick Search
 - c. Layout: Park-Species Profile
 - d. Select Unit: <the park unit you are interested in>
 - e. Taxonomic Category: <either leave as All or change to the taxonomic category the species you are going to link observations to is in>
 - f. Name Type: <choose scientific or common depending on what species name type you will be entering in the Name field.
 - g. Name: <part or all of the species name you what to link observations to>
- 4) Click the Search Button, a refine search table appears with a list of species names that could be potential matches to what you typed in the Name field.
- 5) Select the name you are interested in and that park-species profile will load.
- 6) Click on the Hyperlinked text "Edit Profile" that appears under the Park_Species Profile title. This will allow you to edit the profile.
- 7) Click on the Evidence tab. This is where you can link observation records to a park-species.

10.4 Will the public be able to see observation data?

No, the observation data will only be viewable to NPS staff, partners and contractors; this means only individuals with an NPS Domain account and login.

10.5 How can I make a correction or add to my park's observation data?

The observation data will be editable on the IRMA Portal at the beginning of May, if you have edit permissions. If you do not have permission to edit observation data for a park, please contact your park's [Point of Contact](#).

10.6 When will I be able to add or edit information on the IRMA Portal?

May 1st, 2011

10.7 Where can I find field definitions?

The field definitions for observation data are located in [Appendix B](#) of this document. (Section 9)

10.8 What are the Legacy fields that appear in the Observation Profile?

During migration of the Observation data some data migration was more difficult to complete without heads up conversion of the data. For these fields the data that was entered in Oracle was preserved and labeled as Legacy. This is a way of checking that data has not been changed or lost as further conversions occur to the observation data to fill in the new database schema.

All legacy field information will need to be checked in the new fields to ensure data migrated properly. This check can only be done using human eyes. No more automation can be programmed for this task. If the data did not migrate properly, those data will need to be correctly added/updated in the new fields.

WASO will be contacting each POC to devise a plan to help get these new fields correctly populated from the legacy fields.

10.9 Do the Legacy fields need to be filled in for a new record?

No, and they cannot be edited, the legacy fields will only have values for the records that were migrated from the Oracle database.

10.10 Do all the fields need to be filled in?

No, only fill in the information that you have, the more that can be entered the better but we do not expect all the fields to have a value. Some fields will not be relevant for all data, for example plant data will not have a value for sex.